How to Talk About Using Condoms

Using condoms helps keep you and your partner healthy. Here’s how you can bring them up:

- **The condom talk should happen before you have sex.** Don’t want to stop things in the middle or worried you won’t get to it at all? Practice what you’re going to say beforehand, then, choose the right time to talk — before things get hot and heavy.

- **Be direct about what you want and why.** Using condoms correctly and consistently provides the best protection against STDs and HIV. Stress that sex without protection is not an option because your health and safety matter.

- **Talk about how using condoms can enhance your sex life.** Condoms can help you relax and enjoy yourself. In fact, people who use condoms rate their sexual experiences as just as pleasurable as people who don’t.

- **Make a plan.** Decide who will buy condoms and make a plan to use them every time.

If your partner doesn’t want to use condoms, find out why and talk it out:

**If Your Partner Says:** I don’t like using condoms.  
**You Can Say:** Why not?

**If Your Partner Says:** It doesn’t feel as good with a condom.  
**You Can Say:** I’ll feel more relaxed. If I’m more relaxed, it will be better for both of us.

**If Your Partner Says:** Condoms are gross.  
**You Can Say:** Being pregnant when I don’t want to be is worse. So is getting an STD.

**If Your Partner Says:** Don’t you trust me?  
**You Can Say:** Trust isn’t the point. People can have an STD without knowing it.

**If Your Partner Says:** I’ll pull out in time.  
**You Can Say:** Pulling out doesn’t help much with STDs, and it can be hard to pull out in time.

**If Your Partner Says:** Condoms aren’t romantic.  
**You Can Say:** Protecting each other’s health sounds really romantic to me.

**If Your Partner Says:** It just isn’t as sensitive.  
**You Can Say:** With a condom you might last even longer, and that’ll make up for it. Or let’s try a female condom.

**If Your Partner Says:** Putting it on interrupts everything.  
**You Can Say:** Not if I help put it on.

**If Your Partner Says:** I’ll try, but it might not work.  
**You Can Say:** Practice makes perfect.

**If Your Partner Says:** But I love you.  
**You Can Say:** Then you’ll help me stay healthy.

**If Your Partner Says:** I guess you don’t really love me.  
**You Can Say:** I’m not going to “prove my love” by risking my health. Do you really love me? Do you want me to feel safe?

**If Your Partner Says:** I’m not using a condom, no matter what.  
**You Can Say:** I’m not having sex without a condom, no matter what. Let’s not have sex.

**If Your Partner Says:** Just this once without it. Just the first time.  
**You Can Say:** It only takes once to get pregnant or pass an STD.